

## Media Release

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## YES Company 'old tech' rivals high tech

iPod, MP3, 3G, Photo & Video Messaging – it's all high tech stuff and it's what our young people are into - and likely even to progress from, before the rest of the population catches on.

So when Far North Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) Company, MCNA Inc. unveiled its solution to amplifying music played from mobile phones, there were plenty of sceptics about - especially as multi-national conglomerates like Apple, Sony and Panasonic have already invested tens of millions on 'high tech' amplification solutions for audio devices.

Sponsored throughout Northland by Far North electricity generation and lines network company, Top Energy, the YES Programme is part of the broader Education for Enterprise Programme (E4E) which fosters an enterprise culture in Northland schools, by focussing the curriculum in a way where students can see the relevance of their learning – and to help them develop into enterprising people. It's a year-long experiential business learning programme, where year 11 through 13 students form start-up companies, become directors and follow their own business plans to develop products/services which they market and sell. The programme is supported in participating schools by teachers and by a Regional Co-ordinator, who arranges directors' seminars, trade fairs, oral and end of year presentations and teacher/mentor training.

The original idea for MCNA Inc.'s audio enhancement device, marketed under the brand name, *The Sube*, came from the company's 16 year old Managing Director, Ashe Cooper. Using a surprisingly 'old tech' approach, their device is made from acrylic plastic, moulded into a small rectangular vessel. When a mobile phone playing music is placed inside it, sound is bounced off the vessel's walls at a higher frequency which according to MCNA Inc., amplifies volume by as much as 11%, depending on the type of phone used.

According to Cooper, the idea for *The Sube* came to him while watching classmates on the school bus having a competition to see whose mobile phone could produce the loudest music. He noticed

they were cupping their hands around the phones to try and amplify the sound and thought, in true entrepreneurial style, there must be a better way.

All students at Bay of Islands College, Kawakawa, Cooper and his fellow MCNA Inc. Directors, Michael Hiko-Nodder, Nerissa Kapa and Misty-Blue Ngere then set about developing the idea to bring to market. And just in case you think this simple but effective idea would be easily replicated, *The Sube* is already the subject of a patent application.

The Yes Company, MCNA Inc. team say they are quickly learning about the different qualities it takes to run a successful business and how much effort and commitment is needed. They've also been surprised how much of a challenge working with friends can be, when from time to time not all team members see eye to eye on certain matters.

Says Top Energy Chief Executive, Russell Shaw, "We see YES as a powerful, hands-on learning experience for Northland's young people. The programme teaches them about the business world and helps them develop enterprising minds. It also gives them insights into the dynamics of how people have to find ways to work together, to achieve their business goals".

Shaw also believes the YES Sponsorship fits well with other educational programmes his company sponsors in the Far North, including; WaterSafe - which teaches primary school children graduated learn to swim and personal water survival skills and the Far North Science & Technology Fair - which is an effective hands-on way to promote science and technology to secondary school students, while helping them to develop investigative and problem-solving life-skills. END.

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Pic. YES Company, MCNA Inc. Directors, left to right, Nerissa Kapa, Ashe Cooper and Michael Hiko-Nodder. Misty-Blue Ngere was absent.